

Glossary

- Academic language:** A register of the English language; the formal variety of language used for academic purposes (e.g., in academic conversations, lectures, and textbooks) and connected with literacy and academic achievement. Includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills used to acquire new knowledge and accomplish academic tasks. In the United States, sometimes known as *academic English*.
- Accommodation:** In the context of testing, a change in an assessment itself or the way in which it is administered, intended to make the test results more accurate by creating conditions that allow a test taker to demonstrate his or her knowledge or skills. Examples include allowing extended time and permitting the use of a bilingual glossary.
- Authentic language:** Language that has not been modified or simplified. Typically refers to language that is written for a native-speaking or proficient audience and created by a native speaker to convey a message.
- Benchmark assessment:** A short assessment administered at regular intervals to give teachers feedback on how well students are meeting the academic standards that have been set; a tool to measure student growth and tailor curriculum or design an intervention to meet individual learning needs. Sometimes known as *formative assessment*.
- Bilingual education:** A school program using two languages, typically the native language of some students and a target language. The amount of time and the subject(s) in each language depend on the type of bilingual program, its specific objectives, and students' level of language proficiency. (See Appendix A.)
- Collocations:** Words or terms that occur together in a language more frequently than chance would predict and that are used as fixed expressions (e.g., *fast food, take a break, go online*).
- Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** A set of standards published in 2010 by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, intended to bring coherence to what is taught in grades K–12 in English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects and for mathematics in the United States. Adopted by most states in the United States, plus the District of Columbia and some U.S. territories.
- Community of practice:** A group of people who engage in a process of collective learning as they practice their profession. Each group member brings his or her own skill set, and the group actively shares knowledge, resources, experiences, and orientations to their work, while strengthening their relationships with one another, to enhance their collaborative efforts. Coined by Lave and Wegner (1991).
- Comprehensible input:** Oral or written input (e.g., new information) to the learner, structured or presented in such a way as to help him or her negotiate the meaning of the communication (e.g., through visuals, gestures, annotations). Over time, the input may increase in complexity of the language structures used or the amount of information shared.
- Content-based ESL:** An approach to instruction in which content topics are used as the vehicle for learning a new language—in this case, English. Teachers use a variety of techniques to help students develop language, content knowledge, and study skills. Instruction may be delivered through thematic units and tied to the subject-area instruction that English learners receive in grade-level and content area classrooms. (See Appendix A.)
- Cultural diversity:** The variety of cultures that students have in a classroom or school. Culture includes the customs, lifestyle, traditions, attitudes, norms of behavior, and artifacts of a given people. Culturally diverse students may have different races, ethnicities, languages, and socioeconomic status. A goal in the classroom is to respect and honor the diverse cultures and build on different ways of knowing or interpreting the world.

Culturally responsive instruction: An approach to classroom instruction that respects and builds on the different cultural characteristics of all students and ensures that academic discussions are open to different cultural views and perspectives. Student ways of knowing are elicited, pedagogical materials are multicultural, and values are shared and affirmed. Also known as *culturally responsive teaching* or *culturally relevant teaching*.

Discourse: A sequence of utterances—spoken or written sentences—that form a larger unit in a specific social context. For example, a dinner conversation, an academic lecture, a weather report, a kindergarten show-and-tell.

Dual language program: A type of bilingual education in which the goal is bilingualism and students study literacy and content in two languages—the students’ home language and the target language (e.g., Spanish and English). The amount of time and subject(s) in each language may vary by design. Some dual language programs have native speakers of English and native speakers of the target language (e.g., Spanish); others have speakers that come from the same language background. Sheltered instruction is needed in classes when non-native speakers are present and learning through a language in which they are not proficient. A dual language teacher may teach through both languages or may be paired with another teacher who teaches through one of the languages. (See Appendix A.)

Dynamic bilingualism: The ability to use more than one language flexibly and strategically, depending on the audience, conversational partners, or the situation.

English as a new language (ENL): Used in some U.S. states to refer to programs and classes that teach students English as a new (or second or additional) language. (See *ELD* and *ESL*.)

English as a second language (ESL): Refers to programs and classes that teach students English as a second, additional, or new language. May refer to the language teaching specialists and their teaching certifications or endorsements, or may refer to the learners (i.e., ESL students). (See *ELD* and *ENL*; see also Appendix A.)

English language development (ELD): Used in some U.S. states to refer to programs and classes that teach students English as a second, additional, or new language. May refer to the language teaching specialists and their teaching certifications or endorsements. (See *ESL*.)

English language proficiency (ELP) standards: Sets of concise statements identifying the knowledge and skills that English learners are expected to know and be capable of doing in English; statement-by-statement articulations of what students are expected to learn and what schools are expected to teach. May refer to national, state, or district standards. Each U.S. state is required by the federal government to have ELP standards and related assessments. (See *ELD* and *ESL*.)

English learners (ELs)/English language learners (ELLs): Children and adults who are learning English as a second, additional, or new language, at various levels of proficiency. English learners may also be referred to as *limited English proficient (LEP)*, *emergent bilinguals (EBs)*, and *nonnative speakers (NNS)*.

English-only: Used in some U.S. states, English-only refers to students whose native language is English.

English speakers of other languages (ESOL): Students whose first language is not English and who do not write, speak, or understand the language well. In some regions, this term also refers to the programs and classes for English learners.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): The federal education act passed by Congress and signed into law in December 2015, with implementation beginning in the 2017–2018 school year. ESSA holds schools accountable for the success of all their students, including English learners and other underserved populations. Each state must have standards and assessments for mathematics, reading/language arts, English language development, and science. This law replaced the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001.

Family engagement: A mutual partnership among families, communities, and schools built on respect and recognition on all sides of the shared responsibility that families, schools, and communities have to support student learning and success.

- Feedback:** A response by the teacher (or peer) to a student’s output with the intent of helping the student with language learning. Common feedback types are the clarification request, repetition, recast, reformulation, explicit correction, and elicitation of self-repair/self-correction.
- Formative assessment:** Typically, classroom-based assessment of student performance during lessons. Takes place frequently and is ongoing throughout a lesson, involving simple but important techniques such as verbal checks for understanding, teacher-created assessments, and other nonstandardized procedures. A type of informal assessment that provides teachers with immediate information on how well a student is progressing.
- Home language:** The language that a learner speaks at home, usually the first language learned. Also known as *primary language*, *native language*, *first language (L1)*, and *mother tongue*.
- Language form:** Typically refers to aspects of the structure of a language, such as the patterns, rules, and organization of words. Comprises parts of speech, sentence formation, usage, punctuation, and so on, sometimes referred to as the *grammar* of a language.
- Language function:** Typically refers to the specific purpose for which language is being used—to define, compare, persuade, evaluate, and so on.
- Language input:** Oral or written language that is directed to the student. Differs from *language uptake*, which is the language that the student hears, perceives, and processes.
- Language proficiency:** A student’s degree of competence in using a language for communicative and academic purposes. May be categorized as a stage of language acquisition and, in U.S. schools, is typically measured by levels.
- Language transfer:** A process that occurs when a student applies knowledge of one language to another, often with regard to vocabulary, sentence construction, phonology, and cognitive skills. *Positive transfer* can take place when linguistic features and learned patterns (such as cognates, letter-sound correspondences, or ways to find the main idea in a text) of a known language are similar to those in the new language and a student accurately applies them when learning the new language.
- Lesson objectives (language, content, and learning strategy):** Three kinds of objectives that clearly state what students will know and/or be able to do at the end of a lesson.
- Limited English proficient (LEP):** Describes a student who is still developing competence in using English and has limited understanding or use of written and spoken English. The federal government has used the term *LEP* in legislation, but *EL* or *ELL* is more commonly used in U.S. schools.
- Long-term English learner/Long-term English language learner:** A student who has been enrolled in U.S. schools for six or more years but is still designated as an English learner. Definitions and classification criteria vary by state and district, with some stipulating fewer years as an English learner or requiring that a student meet specific benchmarks of English proficiency and academic levels before redesignation as a former English learner.
- Multilingualism:** The use of more than one language by an individual or a community of speakers or within a geographical area. A multilingual person speaks more than one language. A multilingual community consists of a group with speakers of more than one language, but some members of the community may speak only one language.
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS):** MTSS and RtI (Response to Intervention) are often used interchangeably, but MTSS is more comprehensive, addressing student behavioral, socioemotional, and academic issues, whereas RtI focuses primarily on academic progress. See also *Response to Intervention*.
- Newcomer program:** Refers to specially designed academic programs for newly arrived students in U.S. schools who are at low levels of proficiency in English. Newcomers attend these programs for a limited period of time in order to develop academic English, acculturate to U.S. schools, and build content knowledge. They then typically enter an ESL/ELD or bilingual program. The programs may be located within an existing school or at a separate site. (See Appendix A.)
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS):** A set of standards for science education for students in grades K–12, adopted by nineteen states in the United States and the District of Columbia, as of 2017.

Output: Oral or written language generated by a student.

Partner languages: The home language and the target language, sometimes called the first and second languages.

Reclassification: The decision to transfer an English learner out of a language development program because the student has demonstrated that he or she has met the exit criteria. Reclassified, or former, ELs are monitored for several years after exiting the language development program.

Register: A variety of language that is associated with specific social situations. For example, academic language, legal language, baby talk.

Response to Intervention (RtI): A multi-tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning or behavior needs. The RtI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the grade-level or content area classroom (Tier 1). Those who struggle may receive Tier 2 intervention (typically in small groups). Some may need more specialized Tier 3 intervention (usually one-on-one) to ensure successful learning.

Scaffolding: Classroom support given to assist students in learning new information and performing related tasks. Often provided by the teacher through demonstration, modeling, verbal prompts (e.g., questioning), feedback, adapted text, graphic organizers, and language frames, among other techniques. Provided to learners over a period of time but gradually modified and then removed in order to transfer more autonomy to the learner, leading to independence.

Sheltered instruction: An approach to instruction that makes academic content comprehensible for English learners while they are developing academic English proficiency. Sheltered lessons integrate language and content learning and may include culturally responsive instruction as well. Sheltered classrooms may include a mix of native English speakers and English learners or only English learners. (See Appendix A.)

Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)/Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE): Students who have significantly less education than their age-level peers. Such students may have missed years of schooling or several months over the course of several years, resulting in broad knowledge gaps that inhibit their ability to perform at grade level. Some states identify these students as being two years or more below their peers in academic performance. (Sometimes referred to as *Limited Formal Schooling [LFS]* students.)

Social language: A register of the English language that is also referred to as *conversational language* and is the basic language proficiency associated with fluency and vocabulary in everyday situations. Most English learners acquire social language more rapidly than academic language.

Summative assessment: A formal assessment, such as an end-of-course exam or a state standardized test. Used to measure student knowledge over an extended period of time, and may be used to measure growth in a subject area from year to year.

Target language: The language that the student is learning, which is also called *second language (L2)*, *new language*, or *foreign language*.

Translanguaging: The strategic choice to mix two or more languages to serve a specific purpose in a communicative situation or accomplish a task.

Utterance: A unit of language in spoken or written use; utterance is a broader term than *sentence* in that it includes spoken language as well as partial sentences.

Utterance frame: A partially complete spoken or written sentence that a teacher can provide to help students express ideas—for example, *I think _____ is relevant because _____; The reason I agree with _____ is that _____*. Also known as *sentence frame* or *academic language frame*.

Utterance control: The ability to produce well-formed, grammatically correct, and coherent language deliberately and purposefully when speaking or writing.